

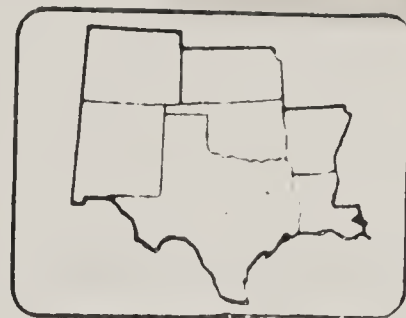
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FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SERVICE

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USDA Proposed Revision of Grade Standards For Fruit Preserves

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed to amend its grade standards for fruit preserves by adding a new grade classification for preserves used as ingredients in other products such as ice cream and pastries.

Carol Tucker Foreman, assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services, said the proposed changes would also eliminate the use of dual grade names for the same quality of products. The proposal retains the two retail grades, U.S. Grade A and U.S. Grade B, but the alternate grade names Fancy and Choice would be dropped to make grades less confusing to consumers.

The texture and consistency of fruit preserves used as "raw ingredients" must be firm enough to withstand remanufacturing. USDA therefore proposes to establish U.S. Grade A for Manufacturing for fruit preserves. The manufacturing grade would have the same requirements as U.S. Grade A, except it would permit preserves to have a very firm or stiff consistency.

Safeguards are also proposed to prevent products intended for remanufacturing from entering normal consumer channels. "The manufacturing grade could not be applied to consumer size packages," said Foreman, "nor could it be used as an alternative in the event a product fails the consumers' Grade A."

Today's proposal would also relax the requirement for wholeness of fruits and permit the use of riper, more flavorful fruits in both the retail and manufacturing grades. The current standards require that preserves in retail grades have a substantial portion of whole or nearly whole fruit in the finished product. Because fully ripened fruits will partially disintegrate during the processing operation, fruit must be used before

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2. USDA Proposes Revision of Grade Standards for Fruit Preserves

it becomes fully ripened.

The requirement for whole or nearly whole fruit would also be waived for preserves packaged for consumers in 1-1/2 ounce or smaller individual serving containers. These small containers do not have the capacity to hold whole or nearly whole pieces of fruit.

Public comments on the proposed revision are invited until Feb. 8, 1979. Comments should be sent to the Executive Secretariat, Room 3167-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250, where they will be available for public inspection during regular business hours.

The full text of the proposal was published in the Dec. 8 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from the Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Quality Division, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

FSQS establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the standards and grading service is voluntary.

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